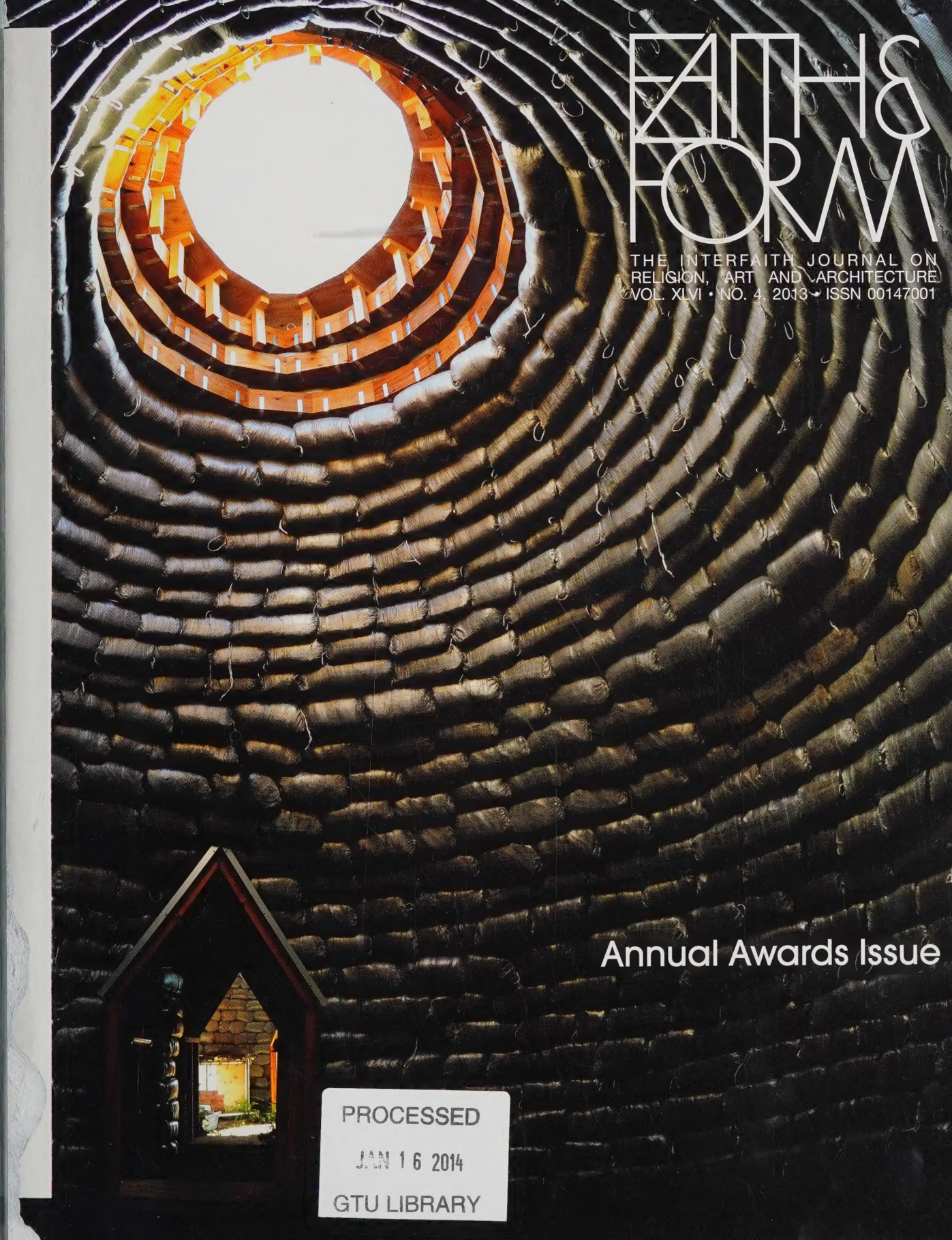

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VOL. XLVI • NO. 4, 2013 • ISSN 00147001

Annual Awards Issue

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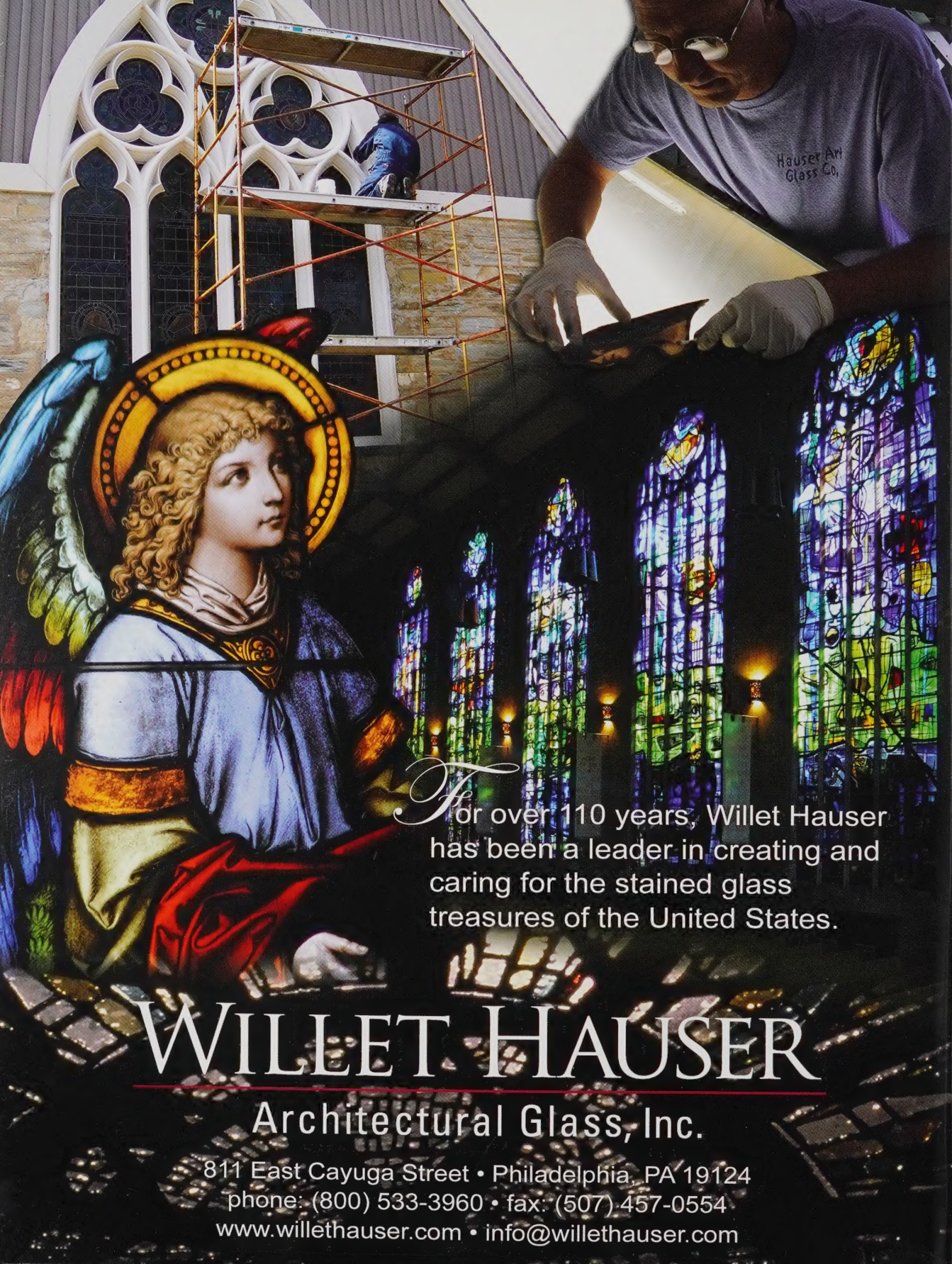

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Manuscript Submission: The editor is pleased to review manuscripts for possible publication. Any subject material relevant to religious art and architecture is welcome. Good visual material is emphasized. Articles may be submitted on disk along with hard copy or emailed to: mcrosbie@faithandform.com. Manuscripts, disks and photos will not be returned unless specifically requested and a return envelope with sufficient postage is included.

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Photo: Motoi Okumura

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The interior of the "Shrine in an Art Pocket in the City" in Saidaiji, Nara, Japan, by Kikuma Watanabe, one of the 19 winning projects in the 2013 International Faith & Form/IFRAA Religious Art and Architecture Awards program. Coverage of the winners starts on page 7.

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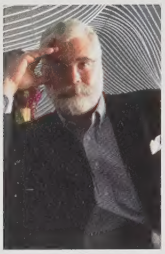

The 'Halo Effect'

You probably have already heard about the "Pope Francis Effect," which has been credited with everything from bringing lapsed Roman Catholics back to church to boosting collection plate offerings. Since Francis became pope last March, attendance in Catholic parishes, first in Italy and now around the world, has bounced. Even atheists are curious, some attending Mass for the first time. The pope's humility and authenticity, and his gift for sincerely living what he preaches and questioning the institution he heads, have been ascribed to more than doubling the crowds in St. Peter's Square at papal audiences.

But here is another dimension of the "Pope Francis Effect": the new pope is good for business. According to an article on the Forbes Website, there is a tourist boom in the Eternal City, up almost 8 percent over last year. Hotels, restaurants, tour and bus companies, souvenir shops—all of them are benefiting from Pope Francis. He is a veritable one-man economic stimulus package.

The "Pope Francis Effect" is like a laser beam, a concentrated focus of the type of energy that the group Partners for Sacred Places calls the "Halo Effect." A study of the economic impact of houses of worship on neighborhoods, conducted by Partners and the University of Pennsylvania, found that 12 Philadelphia congregations contributed $52 million in economic value to the city. According to the study, congregations benefit their communities through direct spending; the value of daycare and K-12 education programs; and a range of "catalyzing or leveraging economic values," things like open space (which increases property values and helps reduce carbon footprint), tourism, volunteer labor, space for community events, and social service programs that stem from the presence of a congregation in the neighborhood. Who benefits? Among the businesses that the study identified are corner stores, hotels, architecture firms, construction companies, florists, custodial suppliers, and restaurants.

These findings build upon earlier research by Partners into the value that congregations contribute to their neighborhoods. That study, called Sacred Places at Risk, found that an urban congregation contributes $140,000 (1997 dollars) on average to support community-serving programs each year. What kind of programs? Amenities such as soup kitchens, day-care centers, job training, substance-abuse counseling. One of the most surprising findings in the SPAR study was the fact that 80 percent of the people who benefited from these outreach programs were not congregation members. The mere presence of a congregation uplifted the neighborhood and its residents.

The report concludes that "...for policy makers, community and business leaders, and funders interested in a particular facet of economic life, these data should help guide their investment." The study's findings might also help refute the resistance that is commonplace in many neighborhoods to new congregations moving in. It recasts houses of worship as community economic drivers that can stimulate growth and improve neighborhoods. In 2014, *Faith & Form* will dedicate a theme issue to "The Sacred in the City," which will consider how congregations and houses of worship function, contribute, and situate themselves in the urban context.

Walter Sedovic and Jill Gotthelf write elsewhere in this issue *(page 38)* that houses of worship have significant assets that should be recognized and well tended for the long-term health of the religious organization. But, as the Partners' research verifies, congregations themselves are assets to the community that make important economic contributions to the health and welfare of everyone in the neighborhood.

And you don't have to be Pope Francis to have an impact.

Michael J. Crosbie is the Editor-in-Chief of *Faith & Form* and can be reached by email at mcrosbie@faithandform.com

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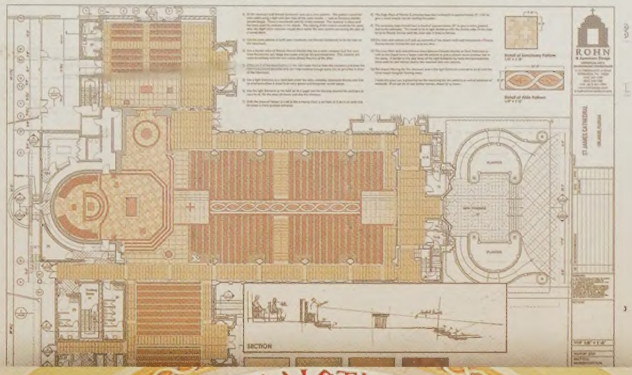

Murals depicting the life of St. James Crucifix and Liturgical Furniture

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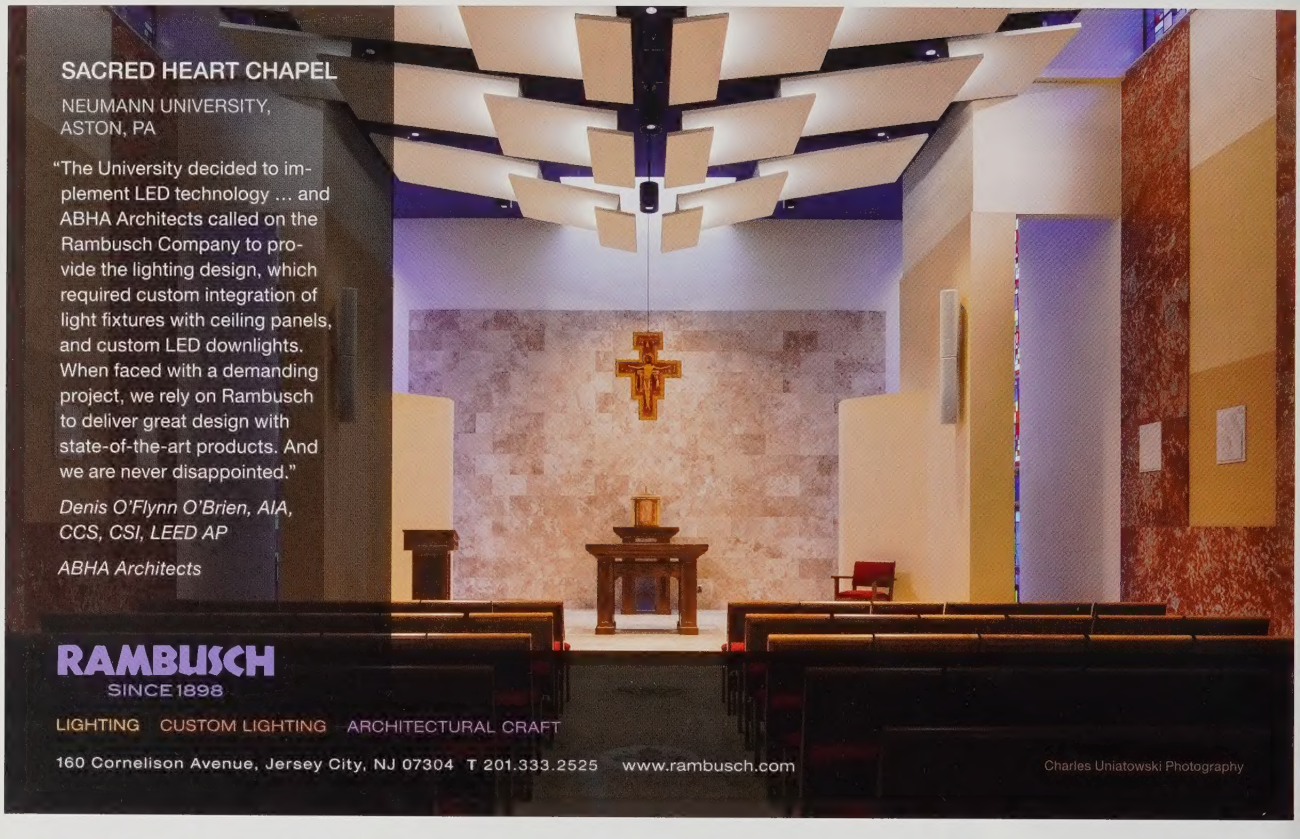
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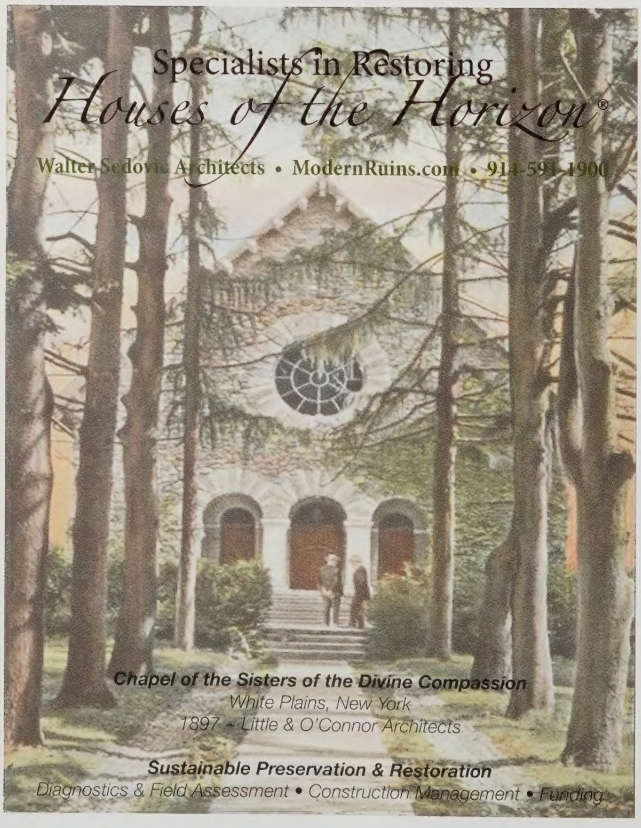
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The 2013 Religious Art & Architecture Awards

By Michael J. Crosbie

Photo: Nell Redmond

The 2013 Religious Art and Architecture Awards Jury, left to right: Frank Harmon (architect); Terry Byrd Eason (liturgical designer); Joan Soranno (architect); Rev. W. Joseph Mann (clergy and jury chair); Fr. John Giuliani (artist).

This year's awards program seems to verify trends seen in previous years, trends that appear to still be registering the reverberations of the downtown in the construction industry, which is yet climbing out of its slump. The trend over the past year has been an uptick in the number of projects submitted in the renovation and restoration categories. This year, 23 projects were submitted in these categories, attesting to the stamina of this kind of work. It appears that many congregations are choosing to renovate or restore existing facilities rather than build anew. Even in the category of new facilities, many projects were new construction connected to existing buildings. This might be a long-term trend in working for religious clients. It has been reported that donations to religious groups have dropped in recent years while charitable donations to non-religious organizations have grown. Studies have cited declining membership in organized religion as part of the reason; such shortfalls appear to be having an impact on more religious groups opting for renovating existing facilities rather than building new ones.

This year's awards jury noted that the stronger projects in the submissions were in the remodeling and restoration categories. The jury was particularly impressed with the number of older buildings that had been rescued from complete destruction. Several projects, and a number of award winners, were facilities that had closed or been abandoned. This bodes well for the existing religious building stock.

When asked what new trends stood out among this year's submissions, the jurors were unanimous in their appreciation for simple, modest projects executed with an impressive level of skill and attention to detail. For example, a former welding shop that was no more than a sheet-metal building was transformed into a Greek Orthodox church with a strong modernist vocabulary. The jurors remarked on the encouraging number of projects that made the most out of slim budgets. Tiny existing houses of worship built of local, indigenous materials were revived as "a gesture of faith," as one juror described it. Several projects were at the scale of rural churches, providing new environments for long-standing congregations. There was a dearth of "big box" churches submitted, which might reflect recent declines in that genre, as well as the low priority in these buildings regarding quality design.

The number of entrants in the religious arts categories was not robust, with the "ceremonial objects" category drawing no entries. Nonetheless, the jurors were impressed with the number of religious arts entries that addressed such challenging issues as death and transfiguration. This work, noted one juror, "struggles to deal with cosmic realities," including scientific questions such as life on this planet and perhaps on other worlds. "It was good to see such work," a juror commented. Stylistically, the jury noted that Modernism seems to be alive and well, with an emphasis on contemporary materials, light, and attention to functional demands of religious spaces.

The jury's advice to future awards program entrants is to show more context in submissions, including a project's immediate surroundings and the setting of art installations. And with the increased number of renovation and restoration projects, the jury stressed the need for more information on existing conditions, the "before" aspects of a project.

The 2014 awards program opens for submissions (at faithandformawards.com) on April 1, 2014.

Tabuenca & Leache, Arquitectos

Saint George Church and Parish Center » Pamplona, Navarra, Spain

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José Manuel Cutillas
Pedro Pegenaute

The program called for the construction of a church for 400 people with a chapel that would be used on a daily basis for one quarter of the capacity. The parish center includes offices, classrooms, and two living quarters for the priests and a small apartment for guests. Urban planning foresaw the erection of the building in the center of the city surrounded by apartment blocks, many as high as eight stories.

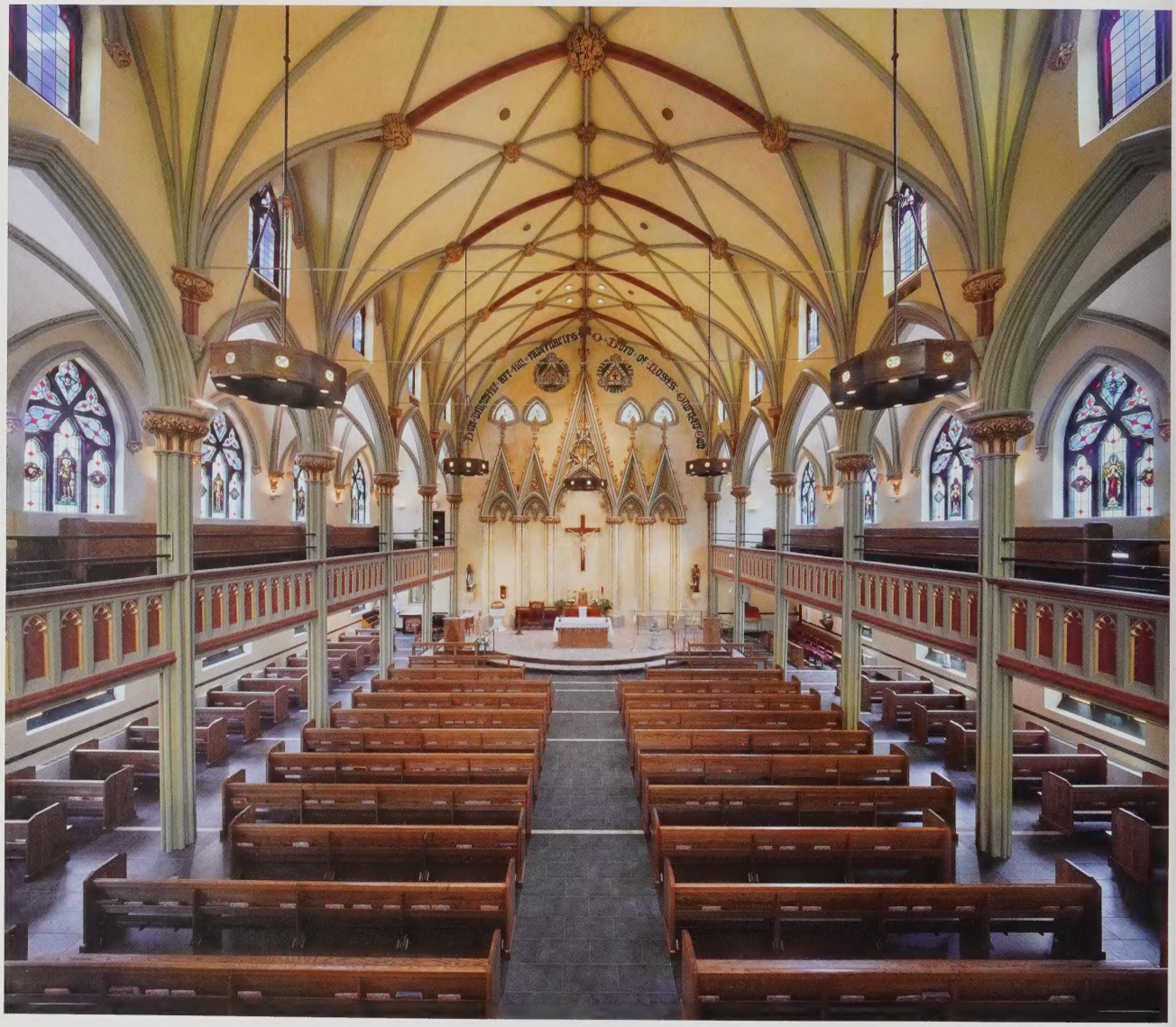
The church is erected perpendicular to the main avenue of the neighborhood and gives continuity in its style to the other buildings on the site, thus complying with local zoning laws. A large atrium fills the function of an exterior lobby, thus linking the plazas. This adds an interesting urban aspect for passersby and it serves as a meeting place before entering the temple, as it connects to the parish center. In the parish center, the priests' quarters have been placed on the top floor. A large patio that goes the length of the facade of the building illumine provides natural light. Three areas (atrium, temple, and parish center) give the complex the sense of a fortress church, with a neutral backdrop of surrounding buildings. The interior of the temple is built in a simple manner, as far as its format and materials. The walls are of concrete, built in the same manner as the exterior walls. This unity in construction allows natural light to be the fundamental ingredient in the nave, providing the necessary repose for the celebration of services and prayer.

Jury Comments

The jury appreciates the clarity, simplicity, and richness of the plan and volume, which has produced striking daylit interior spaces. Although contemporary, the materials have a sense of permanence that is part of the use of stone in buildings for millennia. The texture of the ceiling and the walls relate, giving the interior a unity. The palette is reduced to a duality of light and dark, the result is simplicity and richness.

Acheson Doyle Partners Architects, PC

Church of St. Brigid - St. Emeric » New York, New York



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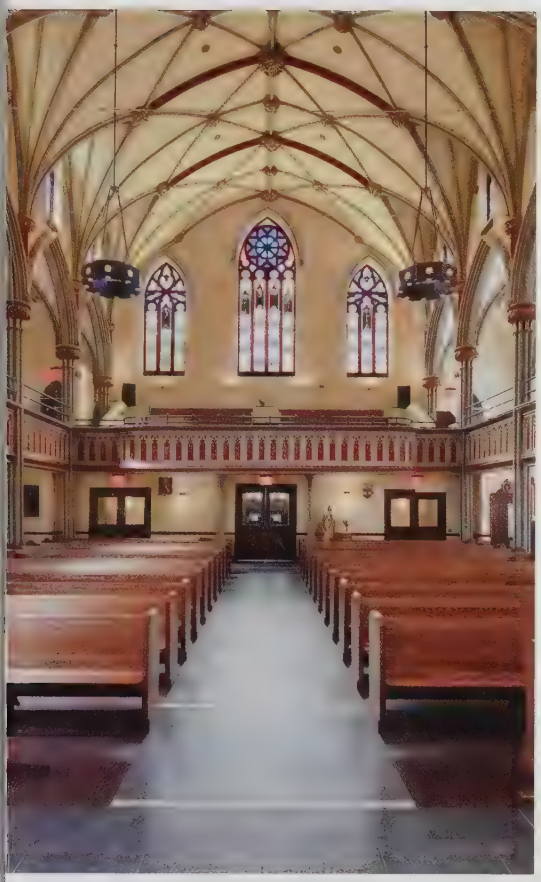


Since 1848 St. Brigid's Church has been a significant anchor for New York City and the East Village community. The church was closed in 2004 due to severe structural damage. A shrinking congregation left the Archdiocese with few resources for repair, but a vocal community argued strenuously for its reopening. An anonymous donation in 2008 made the difference. The intent was to preserve the original features that remained, repair elements at the end of their lifespan, and rebuild an unstable structure that threatened the church using modern construction techniques.

To halt structural deterioration a method of underpinning the foundation with steel piles encased in concrete was devised. The street facades were originally brownstone, but covered with stucco as part of an earlier renovation. Water infiltration behind the stucco made the brownstone unsalvageable. A local precast concrete manufacturer developed custom precast units matching the old brownstone. The brick east wall at the rear of the church had been irreparably damaged through settling. With much of the original plaster reredos intact on the interior side, this wall could not be rebuilt. Instead, the exterior of this wall was encased in a poured-in-place concrete "liner wall" to stabilize it.

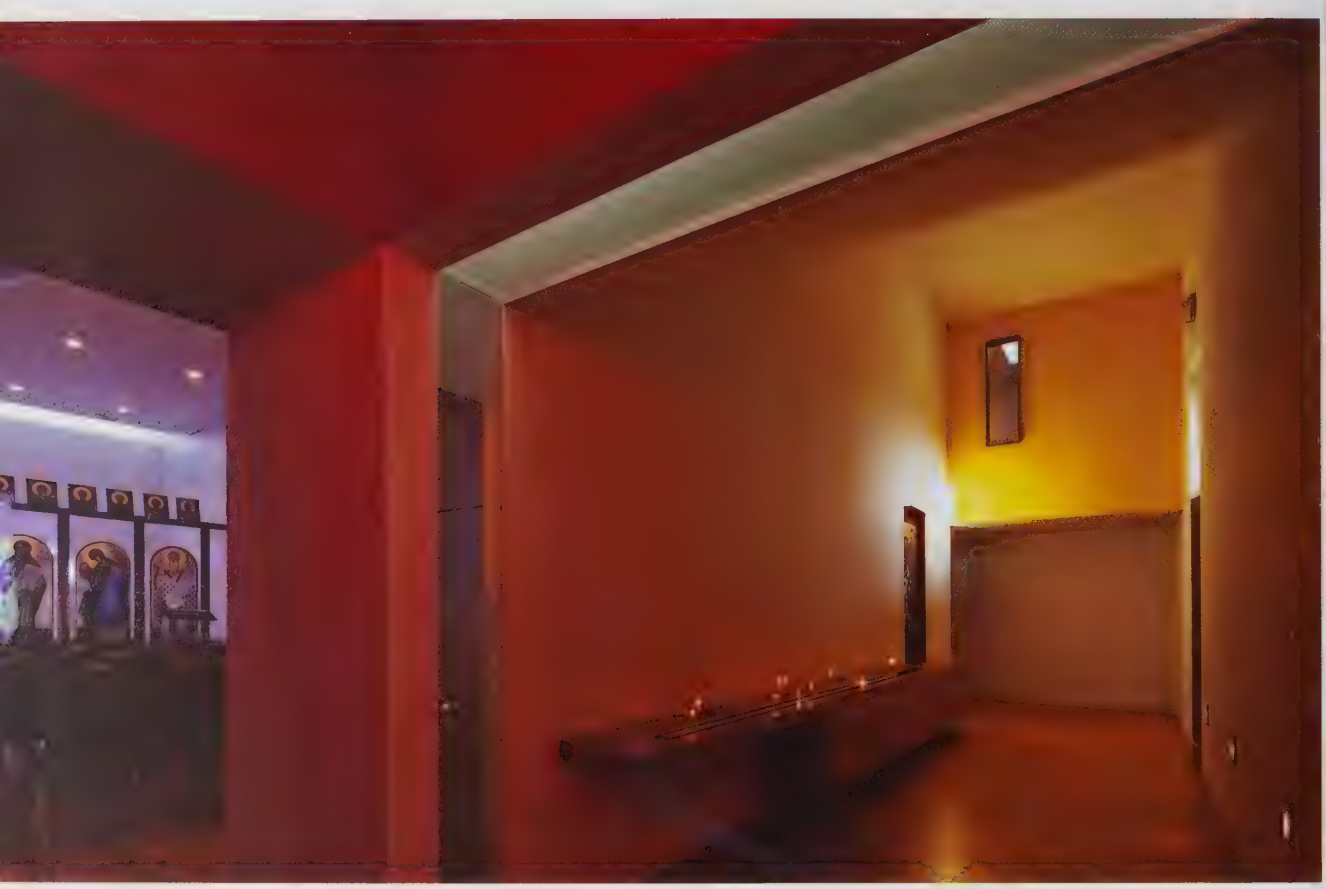
On the interior, a portion of the reredos that had been destroyed was rebuilt. The original painted "art glass" clerestory windows were repaired, but the stained glass was beyond repair. Utilizing elements of stained glass windows from a decommissioned church of the same age, new stained glass windows were created. A large inscription and two emblems over the reredos were restored. Working through renderings and mock-ups, a color palette was developed that celebrates the spatial qualities and elements of the interior.

Jury Comments

Closed in 2004, the jury applauds the client, the architect, and the benefactor for saving this marvelous building. There is a pleasing contrast between interior and exterior: inside is airy and light, the exterior is very subdued. The yellow cast of the new interior warms the space. Particularly fine is the restoration of the wall with rich detail, which explains the structure and makes it vigorous and rich. It is a remarkable resuscitation, and the church is once again an important part of the neighborhood–a true gem.

Marlon Blackwell Architect

Saint Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church » Springdale, Arkansas



The congregation purchased a three-acre site with an existing house and welding shop building, bordered to the east by a park and an interstate highway to the west. The shop was repurposed into a new worship space by removing the western facade to allow for a 10-foot-deep addition along its entire length. It is enveloped by a new skin of box-ribbed metal panels and colored glass openings, obscuring and refining the original gabled form. The steel frame of the original building was modified for the introduction of a tower that highlights the entry to the sanctuary. Although a small structure, its bold form, surface, and symbols make it recognizable both day and night from the nearby highway.

While traditional Eastern Orthodox churches are axial and face east, the building was oriented north-south. Although there are liturgical provisions for "reorienting" a worship space that is unable to face east, the narthex was aligned north/south to allow parishioners to still arrive on axis in the sanctuary. This subtle adjustment allows for a minimal addition, dignified by a long cabinet made of local white oak that embraces the ritual of lighting votive candles en route to worship. The ceiling gradually descends in the narthex, compressing the visitor before passing under the sky-lit tower that marks the entry into the sanctuary. The tower houses a cross filled with red glass, backlit by the sunrise each morning through red transom glass and artificially lit at night to be visible from the adjacent highway. At the east end of the sanctuary, the ceiling is carved away to allow for a transom of translucent glass that bathes the sanctuary in soft light for morning services.

Jury Comments

This project takes a commercial roadside industrial building and turns it into a work of art. The exterior is very successful, creating a spiritual place with an economy of means. Elements such as corrugated metal siding and simple window shapes create a contemporary building of great presence, for a very limited budget. The plan is ingenious in its use of a single volume with a lot of variety. Such an innovative, thoroughly modern building for a traditional faith community is surprising and welcome.

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Restoration and Adaptation of a 16th-Century Chapel » Guadalajara, Spain

This chapel rehabilitation is for a new typology—a multi-purpose space for events—ranging from formal weddings to yoga retreats. The reconstruction involved resolving the complex pathologies suffered by the original structure since being abandoned in 1969.

The philosophy guiding the intervention was to respect time's passing. From the exterior the stone facades were repointed, traditional tile eaves restored, and stone moldings left with their worn faults (including the original scarred Palladian entrance). On the interior, three distinct areas are articulated: the refurbished dome where the original space is restored; the entrance into the nave is a mix of archaeological remains; and new construction cantilevered over the space, minimally touching the original. The fallen vaults that once covered this space are recalled by a new vaulted ceiling of pine slats. Plaster moldings cut out over the bare masonry of the original wall also mark the shapes of the original vaults. The last third occupying the old choir area houses all modern uses, from the elevator allowing for handicapped access to all levels, to restrooms, kitchen, staff, and storage areas. This four-story structure is inserted within the stone walls, a skylight in the stair accentuating its conceptual separation from the original container.

The materials used are the same as the original: beige marble main floor, white paint on the plaster moldings, pine slats on the ceiling and to enclose the modern choir that floats within the volume of the nave.

Jury Comments

The repurpose of this chapel allows it to be used for meditation and gathering, among other things, and remain part of the community. The exterior restoration is sensitively done. The way that the historic fabric was left intact inside, while modern insertions are made clear and are reversible, provides a lovely contrast. The high quality of this restoration makes it possible to shake the hands of the original designers and builders of 500 years ago, while updating it for new life.

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Tabernero de Andres

Circular Chandelier
Ecoaneva

Photographer
Eugeni Pons

Gabriel Guy

Oneiric Hut » Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada

Architect
Gabriel Guy
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Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
519-502-7738
Gabriel Guy, Rachel Novak Guy, Keith Guy,
Marvin Guy, Jeremy Gordon (project team)

This project was an experiment aimed at discovering a more holistic form of architectural knowledge through embodied involvement in its material becoming. The project was influenced by an engagement with issues of myth, memory, and materiality specific to the site that provided a vital understanding of a culturally sustainable creative endeavor.

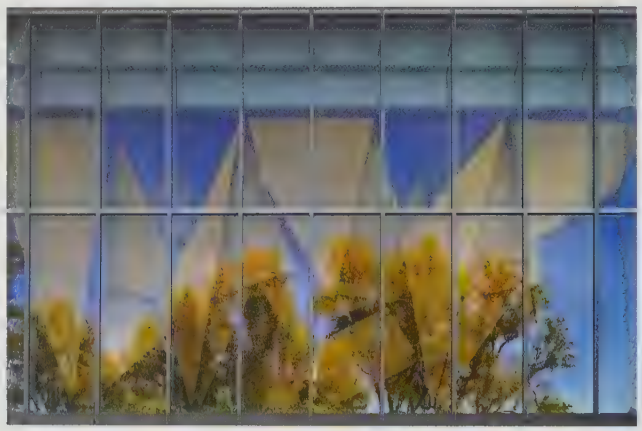
All materials for the project were harvested from the site, reclaimed from two dilapidated barns, and sourced from two local sawmills within a 35-kilometer radius. Contextually, traditional agricultural buildings were used as points of departure in assessing climactically successful building practice. The local indigenous cultural center as well as visits with local residents provided insight and dialogue into regional and traditional embodied knowledge. There was no designing done beforehand and basic construction skills were lacking; construction was one of ad-hoc improvisation and resulted in a challenging process of trial and error. Prolonged isolation, a harsh winter, and building inexperience, all contributed to a rich poetic encounter with the natural environment, the self, and the act of architecture. It was the act of architecture that took on sacred proportions, the struggle to manifest a rather primitive hut from one's own ignorance and harsh conditions. The act of architecture facilitated a kind of archetypal and sacred experience, a pilgrimage toward reconnection with the greater creative force of the cosmos. The final manifestation is a place to sleep, and consequently dream. It is a place to access the creative unconscious, that great wellspring of poetic and religious imagination.

Jury Comments

This project is quite extraordinary, in terms of form and detailing, made by an architecture student who had no construction experience. The design happened on site. The journey the maker took was spiritual, honoring the form, the process, and the materials. It is profoundly made. It symbolizes the possibility in the creation of sacred space. Beautifully presented, eloquent and sophisticated.

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Colombiere Jesuit Community Residence and Chapel » Baltimore, Maryland



Architect
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215-790-5901 (fax)
www.bcj.com
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Structural Engineer
CVM Engineers

MEP/FP Engineer
James Posey Associates

Civil Engineer
Century Engineering

General Contractor
Plano-Coudon, LLC

LEED Consultant
Lorax Partnerships, LLC

Landscape Architect
Hord Coplan Macht, Inc.

Food Service Consultant
Hammer Design Associates, Inc.

Hardware
Jack Soeffing

Acoustical Consultant
Metropolitan Acoustics, LLC

Lighting Consultant
Fisher Marantz Stone

Photographer
Paul Warchol Photography
Halkin Photography, LLC

The design challenge was to create intelligently crafted spaces suitable to house the day-to-day activities of the Jesuits who dwell within the new residence, along with a chapel that would serve as a vessel to transport these men of prayer to a place where God could be found.

The 60,000-gross-square-foot residence and chapel is designed around a stone entry courtyard and a series of site walls that serve to reinforce the 1,600-square-foot chapel as the central design feature and heart of the religious residence. The program includes the chapel, dining facilities, a full commercial grade kitchen, a living room, library, administrative offices, meeting rooms, lounges, laundry facilities, exercise and activity rooms and 38 sleeping room units with private bathrooms.

The light needed to be of a sublime and divine nature. A "tree canopy," crafted of thin steel plate and perforated ash panels, provides the means to realize this objective while recalling the 100-year-old beech tree that anchors the chapel to its site. Evoking the trees in the bucolic setting of the Colombiere Residence, the canopy endows the chapel with the qualities of a sacred place of prayer. It collaborates with the movement of the sun as it arcs across the sky to weave a constantly changing tapestry of dappled light, preparing the spirit for worship. While the canopy may not fit into any traditional architectural vocabulary, Gothic architectural forms and light-giving elements served, in part, to inspire its upward thrust and aspiration to produce a sense of heavenly light.

Jury Comments

Set in a lovely, natural setting, this project has a very successful site plan that preserves the best qualities of the land, shelters the site and the building as a wall. The courtyard and entry sequence works well. The interior of the chapel is wonderful, and the light quality is excellent, as one sees the color of the wood reflected in the glass. The chapel has the ancient sense of a tent.

Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP Co., Ltd.

Sayama Lakeside Cemetery Community Hall » Saitama, Japan

This cemetery is located in the lush forests of the Sayama hills. The goal was to create a space that, while open, would have a degree of closure. Service-related rooms are located in a central, reinforced-concrete core, while the visitor lounge and dining rooms are arranged around the core on a circular plan open to the exterior.

Surrounding the building with a tranquil reflecting pool, resonant with nearby Lake Sayama, the parking and other miscellaneous functions are kept out of view. A delicate ring of slender, solid steel pillars and beams support the wood-roof frame, as if it were floating above it. The roof, with an eave height of 1.35 meters, is like a wide-brim hat. As a result, the building offers two different landscape views, depending on the user's posture (sitting or standing). For people standing, it is an introspective space for gazing on nature indirectly, in the reflections of sky and greenery in the pool, and in the pool reflections striking the ceiling. The large roof beams, descending to the exterior pool, induce visitors to move toward the windows. There, a leather-upholstered bench is built into the wall under the window. In response to the lowness of the ceiling, visitors lower sit on the bench. The building thus tells visitors, "Sit and rest a while before you leave." The moment they sit, the Sayama hills and forests come into view, under the eaves, and the city appears in the distance. Outside, the community of the living presents a contrast with the quiet forest, where the deceased rest. While absorbed in Sayama's beautiful natural surroundings, visitors remember the deceased.

Jury Comments

A quietness and respect resides in this building for the solemn but memorable activities that take place inside it. The pool of the water on the roof gives it a sense of serenity, and light reflects onto the ceiling, giving it a shimmering quality. It perfectly frames the distant view. The concrete con trasts with the wing-like quality of the roof, which has trees growing from its center.

Architect
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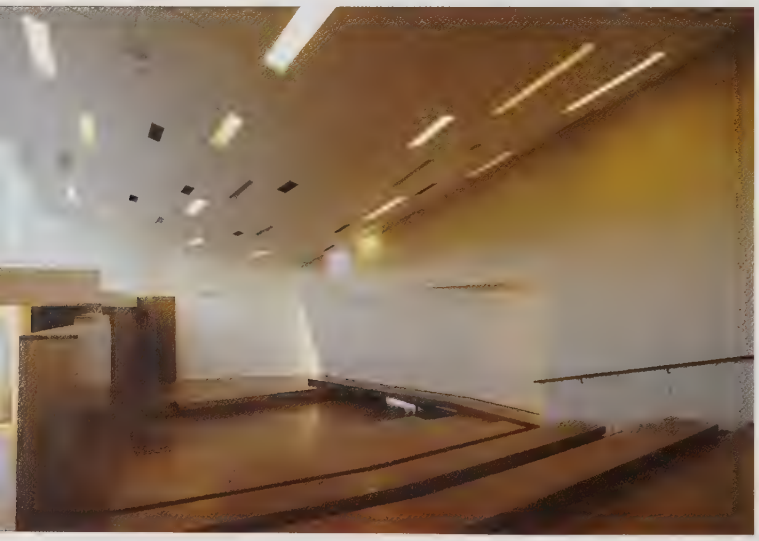
Structural/Facility Design Consultant
ARUP

Photographer
Koji Fujii / Nacasa & Partners Inc.

Brian Healy Architects

Children's Chapel and Education Center » Korean Church of Boston » Brookline, Mass.



As part of its 50th anniversary, the congregation of the Korean Church of Boston decided to honor its third generation members–children ages 5 through 12–by building a new chapel for them next to the existing church. They also decided to provide a teen center with classrooms for seminars and group discussion. By giving the children and young people a special place of their own in which to worship, play, and study, the congregation recognizes and cultivates the participation of its youngest members.

The existing church is a brick building that turns its back on Harvard Street–the main commercial artery of the area. The main church and its entry look across Holden Street toward a town green with City Hall, Library, and Police Station. There are 8,341 square feet of new construction and 2,133 square feet of renovated construction.

The master plan for the sequencing of the renovations and additions addresses both the current campus and its future planning. The Children's Chapel and Education Center was placed parallel to the existing church adjacent to residential buildings that facing the civic institutions of Brookline. This new addition also creates a private interior court. Extensive built-in seating throughout the project allows for informal conversations and interaction outside of the classrooms and the chapel.

A new playground and community center are also located along Harvard Street for use by both the congregation and the public. This center re-establishes the street's edge and provides a connection to the active pedestrian activities of the adjacent commercial community.

Jury Comments

The detailing is very sharp and exquisite, clean and crisp, the way the materials relate. The jury appreciates the contrast between the old and the new, although there is a question of scale. The new building makes a statement about the present day that lives happily with the older building. The materials and tonality are submissive to the original structure. Light, natural materials, and the space suggest a child's freedom of movement. This is a well-wrought, contemporary volume.

Structural Engineer
Richmond So Consulting Engineers

Lighting Design Consultant
LAM Partners

Acoustical Consultant
Threshold Acoustic Engineers

MEP Engineer
Allied Engineers

Civil Engineer
BSC Group

Fabrication
Bill Bancroft

General Contractor
Kang Suk Construction

Photographer
Brian Healy Architects

Architect
Brian Healy Architects
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Brian Healy (design principal); Paxton Sheldahl (project architect); Tom Rourke, Gerry Gutierrez, Tala Klinck, John McDonald, Alec Templeton, Steve Mayer, Matt Pierce, Chris Muskoft, Bohseung Kung, Heike Baraungardt (project team)

Kikuma Watanabe

Shrine in an Air Pocket in the City » Ryuto-Ohashi, Chuo, Niigata, Niigata, Japan

This is a Shinto Shrine for remembering the origin of a people. It was designed for the "Water and Land Art Festival" held in Niigata City. This shrine exists in a vacant lot between two bridges in the center area of Niigata city. At this site there used to be lots of houses where many people lived. But after construction of the bridges, the town and people disappeared. The city is changing every day. We are forgetting the memory of the city. Eventually, we cannot remember what we are, where we came from, where we are going. In this shrine we can be lost in meditation within the calm space of the main hall. We are able to find ourselves and remember our origin in the dome filled with Mother Earth.

Jury Comments

This is an evocative interior space, very spiritual, very sublime. It preserves and memorializes the site of a village that has disappeared. The intent is so beautifully realized, in juxtaposition to the highway. It is earthy, and the site is so difficult, but it handles it with finesse. It is made of very simple materials, and the simplicity is gorgeous. Anyone could be moved by this space. The jury wishes that more buildings could be like this.

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Kikuma Watanabe, Yusuke Kataoka, Shinnosuke Uramoto, Yusei Matsui Yoshihiko Tanji, Kenji Saito, Tadao Kazama (project team)

Consultant
Committee for Water and Land – Niigata Art Festival

Colleagues
Kikuma Watanabe Architecture Design Lab at Kochi University of Technology

Photographer
Motoi Okumura

atelierjones, llc

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Renovation » Seattle, Washington

This renovation and design of a new entry addition to St. Paul's Episcopal revived an iconic church designed by Steinhart/Theriault in 1962. The structure required a new liturgical space for gatherings around a new full-immersion baptismal font, as well as accessibility, structural, and energy upgrades. Stripping away years of accumulated renovations that had marred the powerful space was required, as well as creating a new art glass wall to replace the cheap, plastic-film single-pane existing glass in the nave. The project was initiated and completed for a modest budget of approximately $85 per square foot, including all art glass and liturgical furnishings.

To accommodate gatherings at baptisms a new addition was designed to create a new glazed entry narthex providing natural light/skylight into the new baptismal area and providing transparency to the very public urban Seattle neighborhood. Geometries from the dramatic roof were used subtly in plan to create a relationship to the existing structure, without imitating its iconic drama.

Within the nave, new textured art glass framing new insulated glass units on the east and west walls replace the visual clash and energy inefficiency of the 1960s glass. This procession culminates in a newly finished altar platform with a new artist-designed altar. The 60-foot-high wall behind the altar is treated with an architect-designed artistic paint illumining the entire space of the church. New lighting reveals the dramatic mid-century wood structure and space, bringing cohesive design through detailing and materials to a space suffering from decades of inconsistent additions.

Jury Comments

This church had great bones, but had fallen into disrepair. The architect, artists, and the parish have done a beautiful job, highlighting the strong characteristics of the church. The new glass along the nave is more meditative, and the architectural treatment of the window wall is rich. The textual quality of the altar back wall is exceptional. These are significant changes that support the strength of the original building, and that is very rarely done with a building of this vintage.

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Lighting Designer
DePelecyn studio

Civil Engineers
LPD Engineering PLLC

Structural Engineers
Harriott /Valentine Engineers, Inc.

Artist
Speidel Studio

General Contractor
Foushee Construction

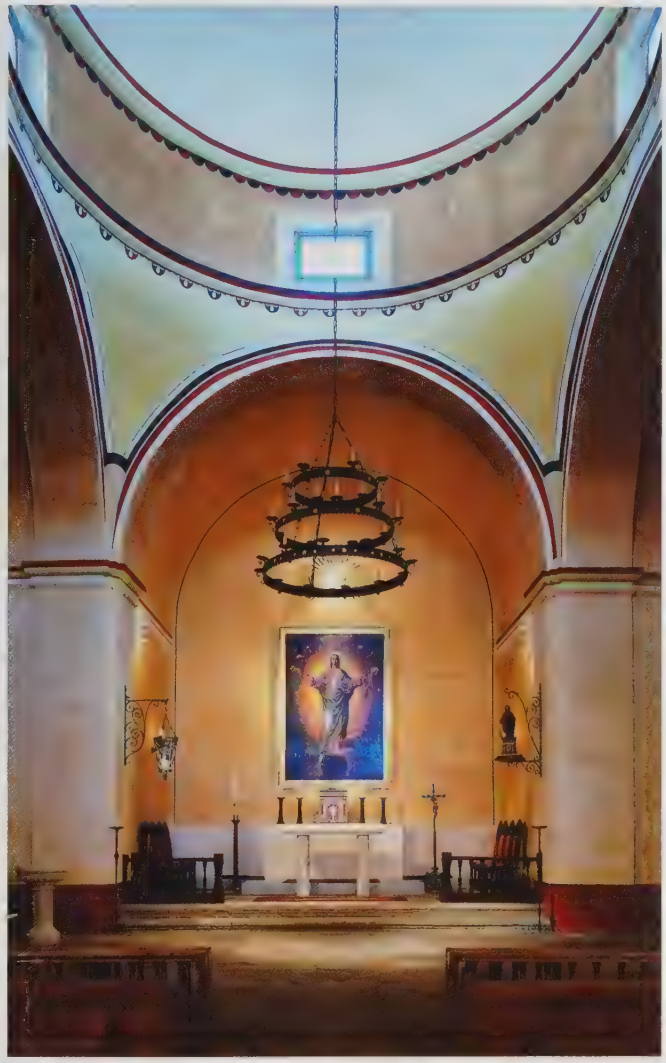
Art Glass/Storefront Installation
Skylight Systems

Glass Fabrication
PULP Glass

Photographer
Lara Swimmer Photography

Ford, Powell & Carson, Architects & Planners, Inc.

Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña » San Antonio, Texas



The San Antonio missions are a unique chain of five Spanish Colonial mission complexes constructed in the 18th century along a 12-mile stretch of the San Antonio River. Four of the missions (excluding the Alamo) comprise the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and house active Roman Catholic parishes. The missions are managed through a cooperative agreement in which the mission churches are maintained by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, while the grounds and surrounding mission buildings are maintained by the National Park Service. As part of an incredible fundraising effort by the Archdiocese's Las Misiónes capital campaign, Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña ("Concepción") received a $350,000 interior restoration.

While preparing for a basic interior maintenance project at Mission Concepción, remnants of original Spanish Colonial frescoes were uncovered beneath loose and crumbling plaster in the main chapel. An extensive investigation was undertaken, documenting a vast amount of Spanish Colonial material under the circa-19th century surface plaster. All extant original plaster was sounded, and any loose material was re-attached using a reversible adhesive. Removed 19th-century plaster was replaced in kind. Because the Spanish Colonial plaster surface was damaged to create keys for the later plaster, it was left in place, covered, and the polychrome patterns and colors were replicated. Mineral paints were used to replicate the quality and character of the original colors. The paint scheme included several washes on the walls and ceiling, as well as repetitive decorative elements such as banding and scallops. Selected small areas of particularly visible historic frescoes were cleaned and consolidated by a specialized conservator, and left exposed to public view. In addition to the work in the nave, original frescoes in the sacristy were restored and stabilized in an earlier phase.

Jury Comments

The warmer plasterwork color feels more intimate, and mellows the space, adding depth and a sense of history to it. The recovered original plaster colors are used to great effect. This is an example of a simple and direct intervention that brings back the original quality of a sacred space. It is an amazing transformation that preserves a little piece of history.

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Carolyn Peterson, FAIA (principal-in-charge); Rachel Wright, AIA (project manager); Allison Chambers, Associate AIA, LEED AP (preservation specialist)

Paint Conservators
Restoration Associates

Photographer
Mark Menjivar

Muñoz & Company/Steven Land Tillotson, AIA

La Lomita Chapel » Mission, Texas

Architect
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San Antonio, TX 78212
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Steven Land Tillotson, AIA (project architect/historic preservation)
Isaac Bernal (project manager)
Jack Stanley, CSI (construction administrator)

Structural Engineer
Hinojosa Engineering, Inc.

Mechanical
Halff Associates

Photographer
Rebecca Rivera

La Lomita first served as a way station and later headquarters for the "Cavalry of Christ." Oblate priests who on horseback served the remote ranch communities in the rugged South Texas cultural province. It was largely abandoned after 1908 when the townsite of Mission was moved, but the chapel continued as a devotional site and, despite its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, was in danger of imminent collapse at the onset of this work. Investigation determined that contrary to the reported 1898 construction date, the original building was of jacal type construction erected prior to 1842. Repairs in 1939 and 1976 using cementitious materials proved to have exacerbated moisture-related damage in the weak sandstone rubble walls; the entire roof structure was inadequate to meet current wind loads. The preservation approach was to restore and accurately reconstruct the chapel to its late 1890s period of greatest significance. The design challenge was to keep as much of the historic fabric intact as possible, stabilize the out-of-plumb walls, and construct a new roof without altering the essential character of the chapel.

The existing roof was removed and the walls braced with structural steel designed to support new framing. Variations in the rafter spacing and purlin sizes were closely reproduced to maintain character and structural components carefully concealed. The existing bell cupola circa 1939 was removed and reconstructed based on historic photographs. A local outcrop provided replacement stone and lime-based mortar, plaster, and whitewash replaced cementitious materials. The simple box carpentry pews and altar were repaired and repainted. Wood windows, shutters, and doors were restored.

Jury Comments

The chapel captures the fundamental humility and spiritual quality of a Christian church. It is rare to find today and it has been well preserved. This is a very serious and thorough reconstruction job that shows considerable architectural as well as engineering skill. Preserving such a building is a delicate balance of what to save and what must be replaced. La Lomita appears to have been carefully considered.

Kodet Architectural Group, Ltd.

Westwood Lutheran Church Sanctuary Restoration » St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Architect
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Edward J. Kodet, Jr., FAIA, CID, LEED AP BD+C; Ken Stone, AIA, CID, LEED AP BD+C; Teri Nagel, CSI, LEED AP BD+C, Mike Schellin, AIA; Bruce Hassig, AIA (project team)

Mechanical/Electrical Engineers
Ericksen Ellison Associates, Inc.

Acoustical Engineer
Kirkegaard Associates

General Contractor
Karkela Construction

Photographer
Dana Wheelock, Wheelock Photography *(top photos)*
Edward J. Kodet *(bottom photo)*

The design team was commissioned to prepare a master plan, phasing plan, and long-term vision for the church, which had originally been designed by Edward Sovik in 1963 and had received numerous awards. The focus of phase one was to work with the congregation and the original architect to renovate and remodel the facility to meet today's liturgical needs as well as to improve acoustics, lighting, and use of today's audio/visual technologies.

The design was to maintain the original architecture while accommodating current worship needs. The project focused on renovation and, most importantly, sensitive restoration. Westwood was originally designed as a traditional symmetrical space. The new plan placed the altar at the center to create a sense of gathering, and the baptismal font was relocated to the central and cross axes. The altar platform and altar furniture were custom designed to be movable, allowing the church to "flip" directions and accommodate smaller gatherings without feeling like the space is too large.

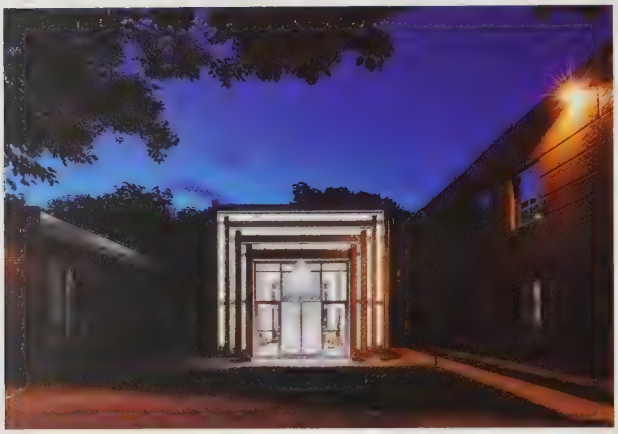
To accommodate better understanding of readings, traditional music, and contemporary music, acoustical interventions included slightly canted side walls and hanging "clouds," which also accomplished other goals including: disguising sprinkler lines and introducing energy-efficient light fixtures. New lighting meets the needs for lumens and low maintenance. A projection system was integrated with the existing architecture and reinforced the design direction as the execution needed to fit in with the original architecture. The design team also worked with a furniture manufacturer to custom-design a chair and bookrack that integrate architecturally into the space.

Jury Comments

This restoration of an Ed Sovik award winning church revives a mid-century building. The restoration uplifts the space with new lighting, as does the removal of pews, which are replaced by movable seating. The restoration makes an already inspiring sacred space more functional. There is a great flow of space.

Integrated Studio

Chapel of St. Monica » Des Moines, Iowa



Architect
Integrated Studio
Cameron Campbell, AIA
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integratedstudio.com

Structural Engineer
Charles Saul Engineering

Contractor
Breiholz Construction

Mechanical and Electrical Contractor
Wolin and Associates

Photographer
Cameron Campbell, AIA

The design program was to create a place of worship for young catholic students ranging from kindergarten through eighth-grade. The children previously had to walk over four blocks in a variety of weather conditions to attend service in the main church. The new worship space is not only for religious education but also provides a place for religious reflection on the school campus.

The 757-square-foot chapel nestled in the courtyard of the school is set back and stepped to provide light into the existing classrooms. In elevation, the structure is a series of nested inverted "U" shapes that allow views to the west and east while maintaining a solid facade to the north and south, preventing sight lines into the adjacent classrooms from across the courtyard. The nested moment-resisting frames reflect light into the space and provide dramatic shadows and highlights throughout the space. In plan, these inverted shapes are separated and pulled apart to allow light to permeate from both the top and sides into the worship space. The artificial lighting mimics and reverses the daytime light quality at night.

The chapel program included an entrance vestibule, worship space, and a small sacristy. The program elements are separated by small walnut veneer demising walls. The limestone altar and ambo provide a sense of permanency while the custom walnut benches provide flexibility for different worship arrangements.

Jury Comments

The way light is filtered through the space provides an uplifting spiritual environment. This is achieved through a series of windows along the edge. There is a rhythm of wood and plaster, unifying the space. Across the axis one sees walls brushed in light, whereas on the other axis one perceives the nested boxes. There is a pleasant movement from chamber to chamber.

Duncan G. Stroik Architect, LLC

The Cathedral of Saint Paul Organ Case » Saint Paul, Minnesota

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574-232-1783
stroik.com
Duncan G. Stroik, AIA (principal-in-charge);
Forest E. Walton (project manager)

Organ Case Fabrication and Installation
Agrell Architectural Carving

General Contractor
JE Dunn Construction

Pipe Organ Restoration
Quimby Pipe Organs

Lighting Consultant
Michaud Cooley Erickson

Photographer
Liam Flahive

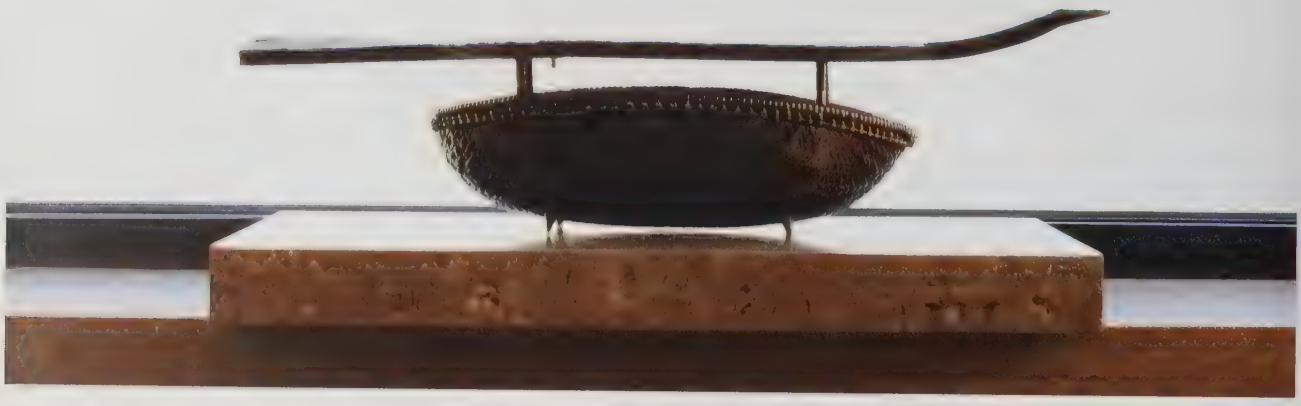
The Cathedral of Saint Paul of 1904 is the *magnum opus* of French emigré architect Emmanuel Louis Masqueray. The interior of the cathedral never had an organ and organ case designed to fill the vast volume. In 2011, a commission was awarded to design a new organ case that would reflect the sophisticated "modern French" classicism of the cathedral. One prominent element of the cathedral is a magnificent rose window on the back wall, nearly 19 feet across. The client requested that this window be left visible; in many French cathedrals such windows are covered by the organ case. Presented with this requirement the architect devised a solution: the organ pipes and case curve downward at the center, following the lower arc of the window. This sweeping movement creates a dynamic form for the organ case while creating a concave frame for the window. Two 35-foot cylindrical towers house the largest of the organ pipes to either side of the window. Carved and gilded ornamentation with an antique patina adorn these two great towers, which culminate in bell-shaped domes, giving a visual expression of the music they bring forth. Statues of angels holding a trumpet and a lyre evoke figural representation of this heavenly music while Saint Cecilia, patroness of music, watches over the choir below. Six months were spent on shop fabrication, assembly, and carving, so that the erection of the organ case on site took only six days.

Jury Comments

This new organ case is designed and constructed to look as though it has always been there. It is totally seamless with the existing cathedral interior, well integrated with the fabric of the original building. It is extremely rich in its details and carvings, a great example of design and craft at its highest, a blessed marriage of esthetics and technology. It is obvious that the people who created this new organ case love what they are doing.

Salvatore V. LaRosa

Pyx Tabernacle » Brooklyn, New York



Artist
Salvatore V. LaRosa
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Brooklyn, NY 11201
212-255-7827
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twelvetabernacles.com

Casting
Wainland's

Fabrication
Studio dell'arte

Woodwork
Arthur Leinoff
SFA Leinoff LLC

Photographer
Steve Freihon Photography

The Pyx Tabernacle is meant to hold the holy sacrament in its basket which alludes to the unleavened bread of the Host. The enclosure is made to suggest a carved bird, representing the Holy Spirit. The piece measures 14 inches by 5 1/2 inches by 2 3/4 inches, and is made of cerused and lacquered wenge, and patinated bronze.

Jury Comments

Although this object is not used for exhibition or adoration, it is a lovely pyx that suggests the historic use of the dove in this liturgical furnishing, providing a great play on symbol and function. It is evocative and very beautiful, with a strong sense of materiality. The material textures are very suggestive of the feathers of a bird.

Erling Hope

"Meronymy / Sukkah 2012" » Temple Adas Israel » Sag Harbor, New York

This project represents a milestone in the refinement of a collaborative creative process designed to foster meaningful exchange between faith communities and visual artists. This process has been developed over the span of several years, informing several completed and ongoing projects for a range of clients. It is this process, called Meronymy, which is the true subject of this work for a three-panel mural for a sukkah. The graphic material that forms the shape and outline of the mural was developed using drawings by children in the synagogue's Hebrew school. Together, the students and the artist reflected on the upcoming holiday of Sukkot, and on the vocabulary term "chesed," a subtle word often translated as loving kindness. The students' drawings of various forms of shelter were arranged digitally into a repeating radial pattern. This full pattern was not shown to the congregation; rather, sections of it were chosen to provide enough information to suggest this pattern without revealing the whole. The section was then rendered full scale and collaboratively in an expressive manner and under the stewardship of the artist.

This occurred over the course of Sukkot. At the end of the holiday, the artist selected segments of the three 4-foot-by-8-foot panels according to how well they held together visually as discrete elements. These panels were cut out and mounted, trimmed as finished paintings, and then auctioned by the synagogue, the proceeds being split between the artist and the synagogue.

Jury Comments

The artist worked close to the community and its children, using an ingenuous collaborative process in which their artwork was recomposed into panels that are extremely expressive and artistic. The colors are wonderful, and the artwork also incorporates text. This project really raises the level of the sukkah as a frame for artwork.

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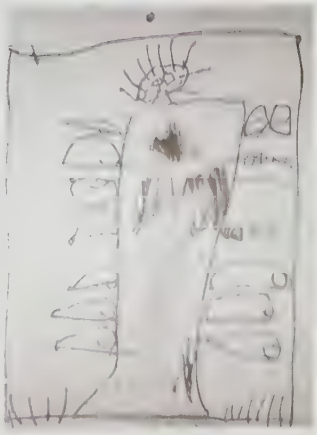
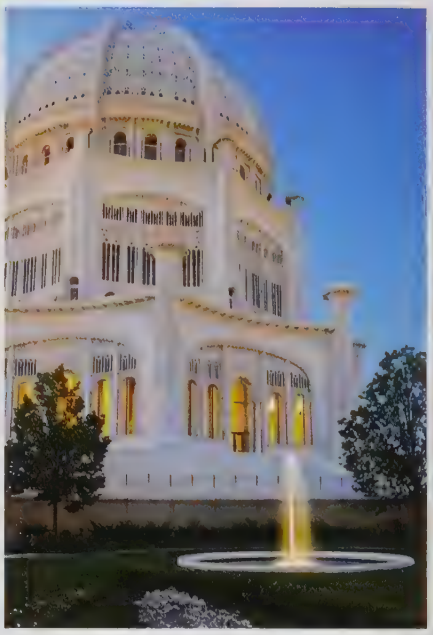
Erling Hope, Rabbi Leon Morris, Nilay Oza (project team)

Architect
OZA Architecture



One World Architecture

Terrace and Gardens Restoration » Baha'i House of Worship » Wilmette, Illinois



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Baha'i House of Worship Projects Office

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MEP Engineer
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Civil Engineer
Watermark Engineering Resources

Structural Engineers
Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.
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Quality Restorations

The Baha'i Temple, situated along the lakeshore north of Chicago, is a major spiritual site for the Baha'i faith and a National Historic Landmark. Integral to the site is a series of nine gardens originally designed by landscape architect Hilbert Dahl, set below a terrace surrounding the temple's nine sides. Each garden has a simple circular fountain and an avenue leading to the elevated terrace. A circular walk bounds the outside perimeter of the gardens, providing a meditative path linking all nine gardens. Trees, flowers, fountains, and other garden images and metaphors are commonly used in the Baha'i writings, making the landscape design an important part of the spiritual experience. Under the harsh weather conditions the terrace and gardens had steadily deteriorated to the point where an extensive overhaul was necessary.

Critical to the restoration was a complete restoration of the crumbling terrace. A new terrace deck of precast pavers produced by the Baha'i Temple conservation staff provide an attractive and durable walking surface surrounding the temple's monumental stairs. New stainless steel guardrails were installed with a design slightly modified to meet the newer building code requirements. All nine gardens were completely restored following Dahl's original planting design. New precast concrete elements were produced using a white quartz mix to carefully match the existing work. New ornamental benches provide further definition of the garden areas, while the fountains were completely rebuilt. Beneath the terrace, new vault spaces provide space for fountain and irrigation systems.

Jury Comments

This restoration has brought the extraordinary gardens back to their original splendor. The jury commends the client for undertaking this important project. The landscape becomes the door of the church, and this provides a setting to establish a contemplative frame of mind.

MZ Architects

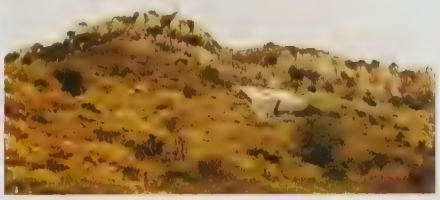
Meditation House » Jebaa, Lebanon

The Meditation House is a place of contemplation and retreat blending into its natural rocky surrounding. The timelessness of the rugged landscape called for a "noninvasive" architecture taking advantage of the strong character of the site rather than challenging it. Like a giant fallen rock nestled on the edge of the hill, the meditation house and its adjacent prayer hall Muṣallā create a dialogue with both nature and God, reflecting the owner's sensitivity towards the environment and his relationship with God. The house design is a pure geometric stone mass with basic structure. A crack in the center of the roof hosts a narrow stairway making its way up through the sloped hill in a natural linear trail, cutting into the rocky escarpment. A dark cave-like passage leads to the rock-embedded Muṣallā, a roofless vertical rectangular volume tilted in the direction of Mecca and immersed in daylight recalling the divine quality of light in Islam: "Allah is the light of heavens and the earth" (Surah 24, Ayah 35).

Dug vertically from the top of the cliff into the profoundness of earth, the austere single chamber pays tribute to God's spiritual essence. As all sounds from the outside world are shut out, a great silence encompasses the Muṣallā allowing a return to the bosom of nature. The simplicity of the volume recalls the primary mosque-type remaining to the present time, which is generally an empty square overall plan, without any monumentality or embellishment.

Jury Comments

This project is awe-inspiring. While it is specific to Islamic religious points, there is nothing extraneous in its commitment to religious thinking. It touches us on the deeper interior spaces, the mystery of the staircases. It connects with the subconscious within us, the interior life, free from specifics. This project would move anyone regardless of his or her faith.



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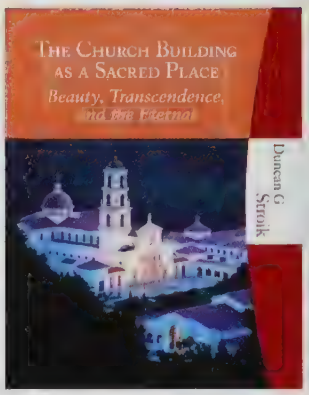
Notes & Comments

Book Review: Formalism Without Irony?

Duncan G. Stroik, *The Church Building as a Sacred Place: Beauty, Transcendence, and the Eternal*. Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books, 2012. Archdiocese of Chicago Liturgy Training Publications. 192 pages, $75.

Erwin Panofsky's well-known 1946 essay on the glory of the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its Abbot Suger emphasized the "negative theology" of Dionysius the Psuedo-Aeropagite. Panofsky appealed to the work of this late-5th-century theologian as representative of the later medieval world-view that informed the building of St. Denis and the amassing of its art treasures—a position that held both an appreciation for a human being's sensory perception and our sense-controlled imagination. Dionysius proposed that while there is a divine hierarchy in the shaping of the spiritual and material world, there is no insurmountable chasm between the highest, purely intelligible sphere of existence and the lowest, almost purely material one. Yet the mind, says the Pseudo-Aeropagite, can rise to that which is not material only under the "material guidance" of that which is—hence the appeal to physical construction that motivated Abbot Suger's zeal for creating a vision of the ineffable in the very materiality of his House of God.

In a similar vein, a vision of a world combining the mystery of the divine with its visible representation in architecture and art informs the recent book by Duncan Stroik, architect and Professor of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame. Comprised of 23 essays previously published in the *Sacred Architecture* journal (of which he is the editor), the book reflects more than 25 years of teaching, study, and practice. Written to help educate parishioners, clergy, and liturgical consultants in American Catholic church design, yet also something of a manifesto, Stroik's essays call for a renewed "sacramental architecture" and deeper appreciation of the value of the domus Dei in church architecture—as opposed to the creation of "worship spaces," which has dominated the field since the Second Vatican Council.



Stroik starts from the orientation that the material world of architecture—if carried out according to certain aesthetic standards—can indeed "articulate the truths of faith." Material form can convey the immaterial, and the building itself can become "a three dimensional form of Christianity." Stroik draws inspiration from traditional, archetypal forms—porticos, bell towers, colonnades, and vaulting—calling for their use to "envelop the pilgrim." His reverence, however, is less for the anagogical illumination of the French Medieval tradition than for the churches of the Italian Renaissance—buildings such as Santa Sabina and S. Maria Maggiore, or St. John Lateran, the Church of the Gesu, and St Peter's Basilica.

Not surprisingly, Stroik asserts the importance of liturgy as the very foundation of Christian sacred building. In this regard the basilican form becomes archetypal for Stroik, who sees it as the best means for conveying the *mysterium tremendum* of the sanctuary evident at many levels. From a strikingly dualistic point of view, he argues for the ways in which the "classical tradition" in particular can inform the design of churches—a position he asserts against the legacy and continued impact of modernism on the philosophy and aesthetic choices of the contemporary Church. One is left a bit surprised by the formalism of Stroik's position (could it bear within it a certain irony?). How, we might wonder, did he react to the new pope's recent word of caution that the Church must always take care lest it become closed and self-referential? Or even within the tradition, what place might architectural imagination have in sacred works?

--Karla Britton

The reviewer is a lecturer at the Yale School of Architecture and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

Report From Koinè

The Koinè World Fair for Church Supplies, Liturgical and Ecclesical Art in Vicenza, Italy, drew 12,000 attendees from around the world. The four-day April 2013 event, which has been meeting biannually since 1989, focused on the world of Roman Catholic sacred art, architecture, and religious accoutrements, drawing clergy, artists, craftspeople, designers, architects, product exhibitors, and others in the field. In addition to a wide and diverse range of products, experimental design studies were exhibited. Surprising was the growing number of attendees from emerging Catholic international markets such as the Far East (Philippines, Hong Kong) and Africa (Nigeria, Cameroun, Sudan).

"Koinè Research 2013: Intersection Between the World of Production and Design" was a conference program at the fair that examined the process of moving ideas from concepts, through development, to production. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, a particular focus was given to themes pertaining to liturgical art as well as to those related to the church in the contemporary world.

There was a particular focus on stained glass, given the theme "Contemporary Stained Glass in the Churches: the European Scenario." Numerous examples of glassworks were created by participating European studios: Ateliers Loire (France), Caron Vetrate Artistiche (Italy), Derix Glasstudios (Germany), Domus Dei pddm (Italy), GBB - Glass Studio (Netherlands), Glasmalerei Stift Schlierbach (Austria), Mayer of Munich (Germany), Progetto Arte Poli (Italy), and SG Zelenski (Poland). Among the artists were some of the best known even outside the world of stained glass, such as Gerhard Richter, Johannes Schreiter, Markus Lupertz, Kim En Joong, Valerio Adami, and Riccardo Licata. The exhibition highlighted the wide array of expressions and avenues of art today that, by means of light, interact with spaces and liturgical action.

The seminar "Acoustic Design in Churches: a Methodological Approach," developed in collaboration with the National Service for new sacred buildings of the Italian Bishop Conference, included analysis of case studies and a preview of new guidelines for the acoustic design in churches. The session of liturgical adaptation of celebratory spaces, created in collaboration with the National Office of Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage, Italian Episcopal Conference, allowed participants to compare and contrast liturgical upgrades pertinent to Second Vatican Council reforms. The distinguished speakers from France, Germany, Spain, and Italy highlighted the complexity, similarities, and differences in the relationship between the needs of the liturgy and the preservation of cultural heritage in different countries. A seminar dedicated to "Scheduled Maintenance of Churches" presented research sponsored by the National Service for new sacred buildings and conducted by a working group from the Polytechnic of Milan to develop support tools to facilitate the management of houses of worship.

The next Koinè event is scheduled to take place in Vicenza, April 18-21, 2015.

KOINÈ 2013
FIERA DI VICENZA 13-16 APRILE 2013
MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
LA VETRATA ARTISTICA CONTEMPORANEA NELLE CHIESE: SCENARIO EUROPEO
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION
CONTEMPORARY GLASS WINDOWS IN CHURCHES: EUROPEAN SCENARIO

ACS Conference to Explore Multicultural Religious Expressions

The Forum for Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality is hosting its 2014 international symposium in Toronto, Canada to explore the nature of spiritual expression as articulated in form and space within a multicultural framework. The meeting will take place June 5-8, 2014 at Trinity College at the University of Toronto, located in the heart of Toronto's midtown core. The venue offers a private, contemplative, and beautiful setting conducive to sharing, considering, and speculating about ACS issues. The keynote address will be given by noted architectural historian and theorist Alberto Pérez-Gómez. ACS invites the submission of proposals for papers to be presented at the conference. The deadline for submissions is January 27, 2014. For more information about submission requirements and details about the conference, visit: acsforum.org. ACS is an international scholarly group established in 2007 to advance the development and dissemination of architectural and interdisciplinary scholarship, research, practice, and education on the significance, experience, and meaning of the built environment.

Quote of Note

"Each cloud-capt mountain is a holy altar; an organ breathes in every grove...."

--Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

Book Review: It Was All Sacred to Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright's Sacred Architecture: Faith, Form and Building Technology, Anat Geva, Routledge, 2012, 304 pages, $75.

A book focusing exclusively on the religious architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright seems like such a natural that it is hard to believe that no one had thought of it before Anat Geva, who teaches architecture at Texas A&M University, wrote this comprehensive and absorbing analysis.

Geva observes that, across different faiths, there is an amazing consistency in the symbolic nature of religious buildings and the functions they provide. She notes that the great church architect Ralph Adams Cram, in his book *Church Building* (1924), identified four fundamental qualities of religious architecture: a dwelling place for the Lord; a sacred place apart from the profane; an environment that prompts transcendence; a meeting place for the religious community to receive the wisdom of its leaders. This list of qualities extends backward and forward in time, across millennia. Sacred buildings also provide a symbolic representation of traditions, culture, and heritage. The recent efforts by atheists to create their own churches bears this out: you do not have to be religious to understand the deeply human desire to be part of something that transcends yourself, that will be here long after you are gone. Architecture is the perfect vehicle for such transcendence, whether you believe in an afterlife or not.

Wright considered all of his architecture sacred, notes the author, and he had his own bedrock values no matter what the building's use: Nature; Democracy and Freedom; and Holistic Design. Geva strives to show how Wright used these concepts in the design of religious buildings. Wright designed more than 30 such projects, 10 of which were constructed; Geva's list of projects totals 11 built, as she includes architect Joseph Silsbee's 1886 Unity Chapel in Spring Green, which Wright worked on as a teenager. Geva relates that she visited and documented all the built works for this book.

For Wright (who came from a long line of preachers), Nature represented God's creation, and its organic qualities could be seen in what Wright called "natural architecture." One might detect this as the work of a supreme being in the natural world, and Wright often incorporated nature in his religious buildings. He rejected traditional forms for religious buildings, inherited from earlier cultures. Holistic design, writes Geva, is integrative, weaving faith, form, and building technology into a seamless environment.

Geva presents a conceptual model for examining Wright's religious buildings, one that considers the relations between faith, form, and building technology. She writes concisely about why and how every human culture throughout history has pursued the sacred, relying heavily on the works of such scholars as Mircea Eliade, Richard Kieckhefer, and Harold Turner. Faith shapes form through the belief system's spiritual and functional requirements (this might include, for example, sacred geometry and space for ritual and gathering). Geva also considers how form is generated by a sacred path, a sacred plan, and sacred verticality. By technology, Geva means the materials and structure used to enclose space, the methods of assembly, and the systems use to provide comfort. The author focuses on two of the most important qualities of religious spaces across time: lighting (both natural and artificial) and acoustics. The model, which she uses to examine Wright's religious buildings, is meant to depict the spiritual and physical realms that Geva believes should be integrated in any worship environment—each informing the others.

Geva's book reveals another, perhaps even more profound aspect of Wright as an architect: he was not afraid to talk about the divine in his architecture. The fact that he considered all of his architecture sacred, no matter what the building's function, might give some readers pause. I find it courageous and inspiring that an architect saw his work so connected to and expressive of a higher state of human consciousness. Can you name a practicing architect who thinks so today?

--Michael J. Crosbie

Send Your News to Faith & Form

The editors of Faith & Form want to bring its readers the latest news of those involved in the fields of religion, art, and architecture. Send press releases and materials to the attention of Michael J. Crosbie, Editor, Faith & Form, 47 Grandview Terrace, Essex, CT 06426; email: mcrosbie@faithandform.com.

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Mind Your Assets

Religious buildings have a wealth of attributes that congregations can adapt and benefit from.

The Sacred and the Mundane
Walter Sedovic, FAIA, LEED AP, and Jill H. Gotthelf, AIA, FAPT

There is a stealth transition underway, leaving in its wake the abandonment of a great many of our nation's traditional religious buildings. Reasons range from changes in demographics, differing views in the approach to worship, and building-related costs beyond the reach of congregations. The flip side of this pattern of abandonment is witnessing the myriad inventive ways that secular buildings are being converted for sacred use: movie palaces become tabernacles, storefronts are now sanctuaries, and even a former house of pancakes becomes a house of worship.

In the face of these changes–brought on by financial constraints; skyrocketing costs for building maintenance, energy, and operations; development pressures; evolving needs of spiritual communities–what steps can we take to reasonably predict the future, both from a fiscal and physical standpoint?

Understand Your Assets and Audience

Congregations and the spaces devised to contain them and their spiritual and secular activities tend to be complex and seemingly difficult to adapt to new use. Therefore, when a space becomes underutilized or abandoned, it often remains that way. On the flip side, modifications to sacred spaces often awkwardly subdivide properly proportioned space into unrecognizable–and uncomfortable–forms. Avoiding this destiny requires an assessment and studied understanding of the inherent qualities embedded in the existing building.

Revealing, then capitalizing, on the often hidden assets of our properties allows us to better position them for market opportunities or to reinstate for existing congregations. The triumvirate of performance, stability, and adaptability represents the hallmark of future viability of religious sites, characteristics that define appropriate uses, users, and design parameters.

Performance

Poor building performance leads to abandonment perhaps more than any other cause. Not only can it result in prohibitively costly operations and maintenance, it also affects comfort, space utilization, programming, and joy. Allocation of floor space and volume may no longer be suitable for the present needs of the congregation, or changes in the liturgy. Light levels, acoustics, orientation all have measurable effects on the success of a building to meet performance expectations.

Making buildings better energy performers is a critical first step in staving off undue financial expenditures and stabilizing thermal comfort. This may be accomplished readily by maintaining building envelope, restoring passive systems, tuning up infrastructure systems, and installing controls. In that light, performance is not limited to operations financing, but also encompasses change that can be made to service shrinking congregations via the ability to carve out intimate spaces within large volumes, which affects lighting, HVAC, acoustics, seating, orientation, and access. The benefit of many of our religious properties is that they offer endless possibilities for refinement without necessity of large capital expenditures.

Stability

Religious properties command special places within communities; they are anchors whether one is a member of the congregation or not. Often sited on corner lots or prominent hillsides, they represent the essence and social fabric of a place. Location, of course, can be a two-edged sword. While on the one hand, an iconic building in a central location–often walkable–reflects stability within a community, these same qualities also put religious properties under the klieg lights of developmental pressure. At once a marketing tool for expanded, compatible uses with the neighborhood–those that comfortably coexist with the congregation–we need to be mindful that Trojan horses are present, looking to lure congregations out of their homes.

Adaptability

While the primary objective is for religious properties to remain useful to their intended congregations, we are increasingly faced with a surfeit of religious properties that are under-utilized, abandoned, or threatened with demolition. In such cases, maintaining a building's presence within the community requires adaptability to new uses. There is a limit, though, to the number of performance spaces–a common re-use strategy–that any community can absorb. Examples abound of design approaches making the most of embedded assets, converting religious buildings to libraries, schools, early- and late-life care facilities, community centers, offices, restaurants, retail shops, and residences. That such a variety of uses is possible is attributable to the many offerings typically afforded by sacred sites: large volumes, public assembly space, parking, central location, art and aesthetics, exterior courtyards, variable lighting, acoustics, a complex of multiple buildings, and shared infrastructure among them.

Development considerations and design solutions are best when they are both specific and holistic, providing benefits to the community alongside those of the users. In this regard, work with municipal government, planning offices, preservation coalitions and thematic district councils to review master plans and district goals can help dovetail a site with neighborhood vision and increase marketability for a variety of potential new users. This approach reduces the likelihood of redundant space offerings or working at cross purposes while helping ensure continued viability of properties experiencing the ebb and flow of change, while new liaisons have the power to turn competition into coalition.

Our ability to accommodate change–as a pathway to rebirth–benefits when we are most attentive to the assets in hand. As the saying goes, nothing is as permanent as change, so let's embrace it.

Walter Sedovic and Jill Gotthelf are principals of Walter Sedovic Architects, an award-winning firm specializing in sustainable preservation. They can be reached at: wsa@modernruins.com

Of Tactile Light and Landscapes

The interrelationship between building and perception is one of the most powerful and enduring concepts in architecture. Beyond a metaphor, the idea that architecture functions as a "window" through which one "sees" to the outside world remains a paradigm open to rich interpretation. A cut made through a wall that shapes an exterior view, a longitudinal window through which one perceives a distant horizon, an oculus that opens to the sky and lights the interior —all these architectural devices establish a visual continuum that shapes our mode of apprehending the world.

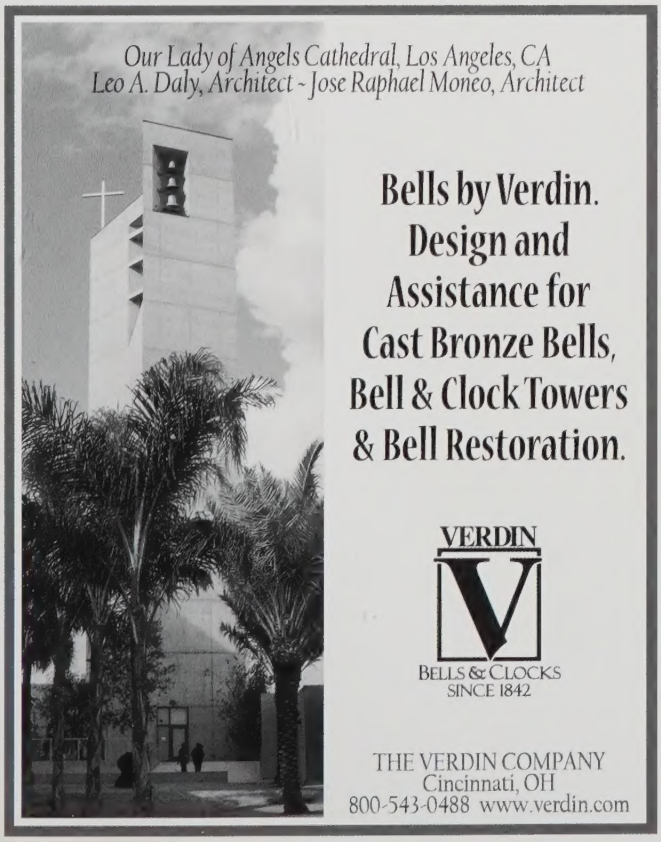
This past summer in New York City, my architecture students and I had the opportunity to consider the contours of the relationship between architecture and perception anew through two major museum exhibitions –James Turrell at the Guggenheim Museum and "Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes" at the Museum of Modern Art. In "Aten Reign," an ethereal atmospheric installation at the centerpiece of Turrell's show, shifting light from along the color spectrum illumined Frank Lloyd Wright's great spiraling rotunda core, sculpted with six thin and translucently layered rings rising from the bottom to the skylight above. Turrell's investigation in this work into perception and modes of seeing reflected his larger concern with questions of eyesight, of light and space, and of what has been called the "haptic" experience of light rather than of physical objects. Using light's "seemingly intangible" essence, Turrell often evokes the symbolism of his Quaker roots, yet his concern for the symbolism of light has also been linked to Abbot Suger and Dionysius before him. The goal, as Turrell puts it in Craig Adcock's book on the artist, is to "create an experience of wordless thought, to make the quality and sensation of light itself something really quite tactile."

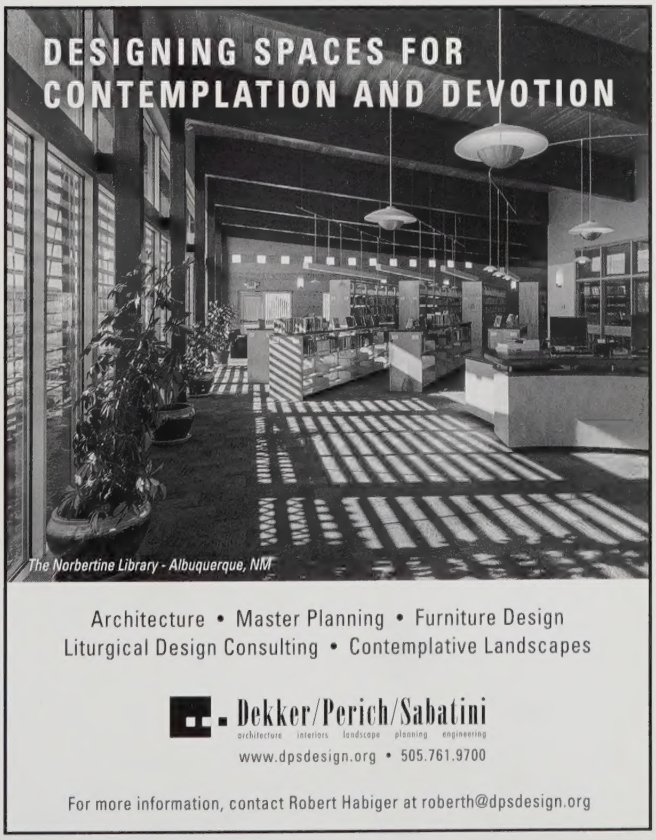
The Le Corbusier retrospective was likewise informed by examining architecture's relationship to vision. The curators set out to explore afresh the ways in which Le Corbusier looked at the world and the manner in which his perception and methods of notating environments altered over time. Tracking observational strategies across the span of Le Corbusier's life—including his travels across the Balkans, to Greece, and Turkey, as well as his architectural work in Europe, the Soviet Union, Tunisia, and in North and South America—the exhibition aimed to assert the deep relationship between practice and place which informed his life and work.

Curiously, the influence of the airplane was felt in both exhibits. For Turrell, the experience of flight is integral to his interest in perception; he has described time in the air as equivalent to time in the studio. In the mid 1970s, Turrell famously used a Guggenheim Fellowship to search with an airplane for an untouched landscape in the desert of the southwestern US—what is now the Roden Crater project—where he could make use of his strategies both over decades of time and expanses of land and sky. For Le Corbusier, the airplane was an extension of his means of beholding a territory and his way of crafting relationships both optically and bodily to the topography below.

Although the exhibitions themselves recalled forms of secular spirituality, the work itself often spoke of a meditative solitude induced by light. It is this solitude, characteristic of the most subtle of sacred architecture, that is constructed by the framing of light's substantive potential—evocative of a "pure brightness" not unlike that of the evening Phos Hilaron.

The writer is a lecturer at Yale's School of Architecture and the Institute of Sacred Music

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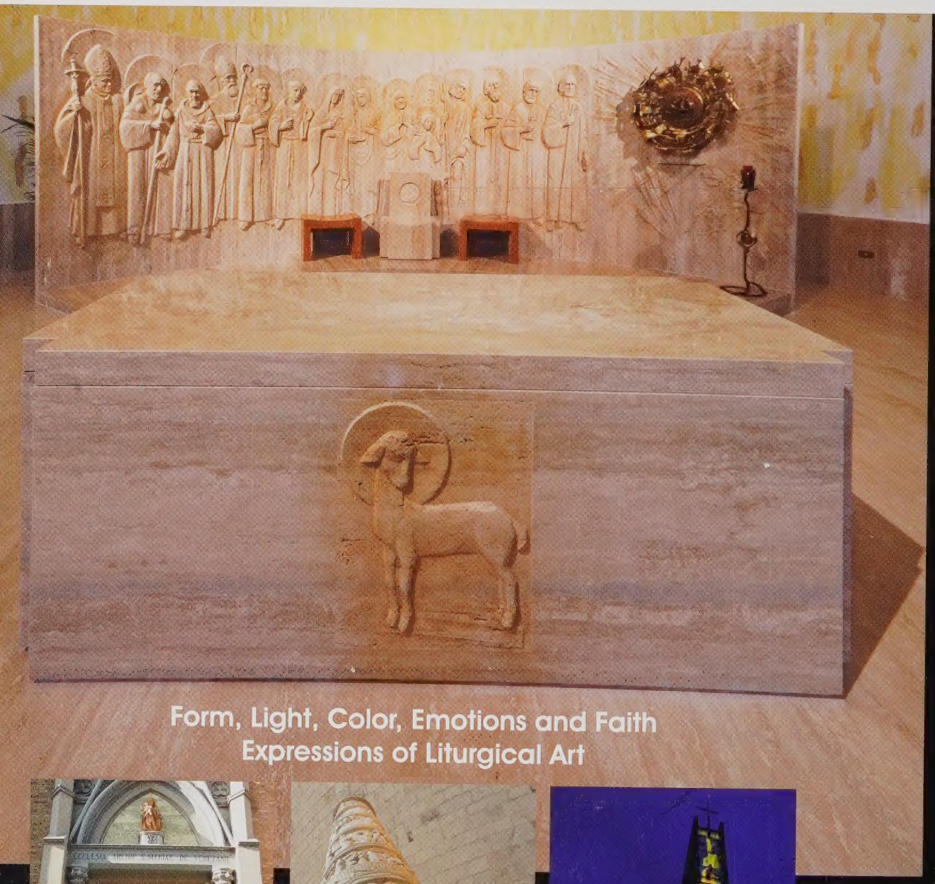

Form, Light, Color, Emotions and Faith
Expressions of Liturgical Art

Entrance door of bronze and wood - Church in Bologna

Marble candleholder Cathedral of Bari

Stained glass window Church in Milan

Backgroud photo: Liturgical furnishings of marble - S.Maria Assunta Church, Cisterna di Latina

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